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DATE: May 1, 2003
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: BEVERLY I. JETT, *P. Jett* CITY CLERK AND CLERK OF COUNCIL
SUBJECT: RETIREMENT

This will serve as my official retirement letter with my retirement being effective on July 1, 2003. I'll assist Jackie with the transition and then be merrily on my way to my next chapter. The last 33 years in the Office of the City Clerk and Clerk of Council have been very rewarding and fulfilling. It is time to spend more quality time with John and get on track with taking care of my health.

As I look back over the years, I can say with pride that I'll be leaving a City Clerk's Office that is much improved and more efficient from the day that I started on July 20, 1970. The City has moved from the manual typewriter and mimeograph machine to the latest technology of computers, digital copying machines, and folding machines. Technology has made life in the Clerk's Office less cumbersome and more efficient. I'll share just a few examples. When I started, the agenda process was tedious and arduous. The tentative agenda was prepared, then the agenda, then the action docket and then the final minutes. Each of the aforementioned tasks meant rekeying the agenda for each process. In the early 80's, the Clerk's Office was fortunate to have the opportunity to experiment processing the docket on an Osborne computer to eliminate some of the steps. That was a fun and rewarding experience for me, and off we went into the computer world. Currently, with the Docket Storage and Retrieval System (DSRS), all one needs to do is create a tentative docket and push a button for each successive process which eliminates the need to rekey the agenda and action information. In addition, the ordinances and resolutions no longer need to be rekeyed but merely imported into the minutes. Dockets were mailed to 550 to 650 subscribers. Today the dockets are mailed to approximately 350 subscribers. With the onslaught of e-mail and facsimiles, we send group e-mails to approximately 125 subscribers and maintain a fax group with about 20 subscribers. Computerized mailing lists and labels no longer require typing individual envelopes. The indexing of Council's legislative history has migrated from individually typed 3" x 5" index cards to a computerized system which has eliminated the need to type numerous index cards for one agenda item, and has greatly improved research time. To research Council's legislative history prior to 1992, one can use the computerized Clerk's Index system and a computerized/digitized microfilm machine to easily retrieve an item, and then the item can be printed, e-mailed, or faxed to the requestor directly from the machine. From FY 1992 forward, the legislative history is available online at the City's web site, and users can do full-text searches of the approved minutes, check the voting record of Council Members, and print out those docket items and actions in which they are interested. With the use of e-mail and voice mail, phone calls and messages taken have decreased drastically. Having been networked from home to the office since the late 80's and early 90's, I have been able to telework when it was not vogue to do so. During these years, the office staff has increased by .75 FTE due to the implementation of the DSRS. The current level of staffing is adequate.

As I prepare to leave a job that I love, my vision has not been completed, but I'm sure down the road it will come to fruition, i.e., a paperless agenda packet, an electronic voting system, speaker recognition system, web casting and/or digitized recording of Council meetings. I'm sure there's much more to follow, and I wish I could be a part of the excitement of the new innovations and improving technology that are to come. I've always enjoyed the challenges of technology.

Thank you for all of your support. I have enjoyed working with each of you and the numerous other Councils throughout the years. Being a public servant is an honorable profession. I am proud to have served the City of Alexandria and its citizens for more than half my life. I'm looking forward to spending more time with John and our families. We will maintain our primary residence in Alexandria. Even though I will take time to decompress, I do not intend to sit out the last inning! I wish you all the best in your future endeavors and Godspeed.